

November 3, 2009

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**"Making sure our veterans get the unwavering support they've earned should be a top priority. Our veterans have made enormous sacrifices to protect our freedom, and our nation should honor their service not just with words, but with action," said Rep. Melancon. "This week, we are passing bills that will help our men and women in uniform, both while they are serving our country and after they have fulfilled their commitments. I will continue working in Congress to keep our promises to Louisiana's troops and veterans by providing them with the resources they need and the benefits they have earned."**

**The Veterans Small Business Assistance and Servicemembers Protection Act (H.R. 3949)** will:

- Strengthen VA outreach efforts to veterans to ensure that they get their earned VA benefits;
- Protect troops and their families against evictions or foreclosure while they are deployed by putting teeth into the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act;
- Ensure fairness to veteran-owned small businesses and protect taxpayer money by holding the VA accountable for making sure federal contracting preferences and advantages for veteran-owned small businesses are effectively targeting veterans; and
- Relieve military personnel who are deploying or changing station from penalties for early termination of contracts for family cell phones, rental leases and car leases.

**The Veterans Retraining Act (H.R. 1168)** provides a stipend and moving assistance to veterans who have been unemployed for at least 4 months and are enrolled in a U.S. Department of Labor re-training program.

**The Military Spouses Residency Relief Act (S. 475)** gives military spouses the ability to keep or change residency when they move from station to station, as is done for service members. This eliminates the need change vehicle and voter registrations and to file tax returns for multiple states with each move. House passage will send this bipartisan priority for

military families to the President for his signature.

Congressman Melancon has a strong record in Congress of supporting veterans, servicemembers, and their families. In 2008, he supported the New GI Bill which restored the promise of a full, four-year college education for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. He also supported provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the "stimulus") that provided a tax credit for hiring unemployed veterans and helped disabled veterans weather the economic downturn with a one-time payment of \$250.

Congressman Melancon has also consistently voted for veterans and defense funding bills, including the largest increase in Veterans Administration funding in the agency's history to ensure that troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan receive the best health care available. Congressman Melancon has also supported reform legislation that will guarantee timely and reliable veterans funding, and voted to give U.S. troops a pay raise in both 2008 and 2009.

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